

He became the first person to use a 900 meter ski jump. For the next 35 years, Rolf competed and won various medals and awards. In 1994, Rolf competed in the United States National Competition and finished in third place.

Then in 1995 tragedy struck. Many people believed that Rolf would never walk again, much less ski.

While Rolf was training in Breckenridge, Colorado, he was going down a run and struck a mogul unexpectedly. The impact was to Rolf's neck and back and he laid in the snow, unable to move. Ski Patrol units moved quickly to stabilize Rolf and to try to minimize the injuries and transport him to a medical facility.

Rolf was air-lifted to Denver Swedish Hospital. The verdict was a spinal cord injury that was initially paralyzing. Rolf was unable to move any of his extremities and the doctors decided that surgery was needed to relieve pressure to the spinal cord. It was unclear to the surgeon whether or not Rolf would receive any motor functions after the surgery. The surgery was a success, but at first there were no signs that it would help Rolf recover any mobility in his legs or arms. Day by day, however, Rolf began to get physical movements back in his extremities.

Rolf was transferred to Craig Hospital where specialists could concentrate on helping him recover. Rolf was convinced, in his heart, that he would not only walk again, but that he would continue his love, skiing. Just a few short weeks after the accident, Rolf was released from the hospital and he returned to Breckenridge to continue physical therapy. He worked hard and miraculously, in a relatively short time, Rolf was skiing again.

Just fourteen months after his accident, Rolf entered in the USSA Masters Competition. He did not place in that competition, but just participating was winning for him. The members of the USSA Masters presented Rolf with an honorary medal.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to offer tribute to Rolf Funk and congratulate him on a miraculous recovery, his patience, strength and faith. Rolf's resilience and undying passion for life is an inspiration to us all.

SIKH BURNS SELF TO DEATH TO PROTEST POLICE BRUTALITY IN INDIA

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I was distressed to hear that Mandeep Pal Singh Sodhi, a 27-year-old Sikh man, burned himself to death in front of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly building. His self-immolation was reported in the Hindustan Times on January 11. He was protesting police brutality against his family. Mandeep Pal Singh Sodhi's brothers were detained and brutalized by police. Their mother was promised an inquiry, but nothing happened.

Recently, the Committee for Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab, led by Hindu

human rights activist Ram Narayan Kumar, issued a preliminary report that included the names and addresses of 838 Sikhs who were picked up, tortured, murdered, and secretly disposed of by the police. According to figures compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy and by human rights groups, the Indian government has killed over a quarter of a million Sikhs since 1984.

It is not just Sikhs who have suffered this kind of oppression. The Indian government has victimized Christians, Muslims, Dalits, and others. Groups associated with the ruling BJP have burned down Christian churches and prayer halls. Allies of the government have murdered nuns, priests, and missionaries.

The self-immolation of Mandeep Pal Singh Sodhi should serve as a wake-up call to the country that proudly proclaims itself "the world's largest democracy." It should serve as a call to India to begin living up to the democratic principles that it proclaims. India must stop this police brutality and release its political prisoners. It must hold a free and fair internationally-supervised plebiscite on the issue of independence in Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and wherever else people within India are struggling for freedom. Until then, the U.S. should stop its aid to India and encourage it to act like the democratic country it claims to be.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the Hindustan Times article into the RECORD.

[From the Hindustan Times, Jan. 11, 2000]

SELF IMMOLATION IN FRONT OF UP ASSEMBLY
(By Bhupendra Pandey)

LUCKNOW, JANUARY 10—Motorists, pedestrians and policemen watched in shock as a young man, allegedly because of police harassment, immolated himself on the busy road opposite the Vidhan Sabha on Monday afternoon.

The 27-year-old youth, identified as Mandeep Pal Singh Sodhi, a resident of Krishna Nagar, suffered 70 per cent burns and died on way to hospital.

Later, the police inspector posted at Krishna Nagar was sent to the police lines for illegally detaining the deceased's brother and harassing his family members. Chief Minister Ram Prakash Gupta has announced a financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh to the dependents of the victim. The District Magistrate of Lucknow has directed the ADM, City, to probe the incident.

According to eyewitnesses, Mandeep got off a bus near the Royal Hotel intersection and doused himself with kerosene. Then, he went towards the Assembly and set himself on fire and started running. Soon, he was transformed into a ball of fire.

After he collapsed and lay writhing on the road, three policemen tried feebly to rescue him. Others also joined them, but by then Mandeep had already suffered excessive burns.

Thereafter, he was taken to the nearby Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Hospital from where he was referred to the KGMC. But he succumbed to burn injuries on the way.

Initially, policemen were unable to identify the youth but later found a slip of paper tucked in his shoes. According to it, Mandeep ran a small chemists shop outside a private nursing home in Krishna Nagar.

Meanwhile, Mandeep's mother, Mrs. Manpreet Kaur, has accused the police of forcing her son to commit suicide. "Fed up with police harassment, my son committed suicide," she said.

According to her, her husband, Surendra Pal Singh, who died five years ago, ran a flourishing transport business. But it ran into tough times after his death. She said that her tale of woes began a year ago when the SO of Sarojini Nagar raided her house and detained her two sons, Yashpal and Inderpal, without specifying the charges. Later, they were booked in a case of a motorcycle theft. In March last year, the two were again booked in a case of another motorcycle theft and jailed. The two brothers were also booked under the Gangster Act.

Mrs. Kaur said that she had earlier met then Chief Minister Kalyan Singh and also the Circle Officer of Sarojini Nagar. She had been assured of an inquiry into the matter. But nothing happened. In fact, Yashpal was picked again on Saturday night in connection with a recent case of motorcycle theft in Krishna Nagar.

Today, Mrs. Kaur decided to complain to the District Magistrate and despite Mandeep's request to her to stay at home, she left for the DM's office. Soon after Mandeep too boarded a bus for the Vidhan Sabha.

Mrs. Kaur learnt about her son's immolation in the afternoon when she came home after meeting the DM. Yashpal was released by the police following the DM's intervention.

STEM CELLS MAY BE THE KEY TO CURING PARKINSON'S AND MANY OTHER DISEASES

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution to allow Federal Funding of human pluripotent stem cell research to help us further understand Parkinson's disease and other medical conditions. I am asking for no specific amount of money, nor to direct disease-specific research. I am only asking that Federal money be allowed to be used to utilize the next best chance science has, to not only treat, but to cure, debilitating and life threatening illnesses that afflict millions of Americans.

Many people have been confusing human pluripotent stem cell research with human embryo research. Stem cells are not embryos. There is a ban on the use of Federal funds for human embryo research in the United States. Stem cells cannot develop into a complete human being, and therefore, under the law, they are not embryos.

Stem cells are a type of cell that can be turned into almost any type of cell or tissue in the body. With further research, these cells may be used as "replacement" cells and tissues to treat many diseases including Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, AIDS, Lou Gehrig's disease and others. Stem cell research holds hope of one day being able to treat brain injury, spinal cord injury, and stroke for which there is currently no treatment available. And they may solve the problem of the body's reaction to foreign tissue, resulting in dramatic improvements in the treatment of a number of life-threatening conditions, such as burns and kidney failure, for which transplantation is currently used.